



28 January 2026

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 20 November 2025, requesting information about Ministry policy and procedures requiring in person interviews and any exemptions.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

- 1. A copy or copies of all of the relevant laws, regulations, directives, policies, procedures, etc. regarding how The Ministry of Social Development / a Work and Income Service Centre must deal with the disabled person to assist them in getting their application properly and timeously processed, assessed and granted or declined.*
- 2. A copy or copies of all of the relevant laws, regulations, directives, policies, procedures, etc. that empower and/or authorise and/or otherwise permit the Ministry of Social Development / a Work and Income Service Centre to ignore a person who has requested in writing that they be allowed to have a telephone conversation or Zoom conference call instead of attending an in person / face to face interview because of serious and disabling health reasons.*
- 3. A copy or copies of all of the relevant laws, regulations, directives, policies, procedures, etc. that empower and/or authorise and/or otherwise permit the Ministry of Social Development / a Work and Income Service Centre to ignore a person who has submitted a G.P.'s Medical Certificate that confirms they are "very unwell", "not able to have any appointment with" a medical professional, and, who says "I am writing this letter to request (xxx) appointment with Work and Income NZ be done as a phone call ...".*

These sections of your request are refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist.

However, all Ministry staff are required to work with the client, irrespective of their presentation to identify the specific needs the client has and then offer appropriate timely services and supports that meet these needs.

Where an individual lives with a health condition or disability, and the health condition or disability prevents them from attending in person or for a face-to-face interview, alternative arrangements may be determined by the Service Centre Manager, where appropriate. Where the client is new to the Ministry or has not

had a face-to-face interview for some time, we may require them to attend a face-to-face meeting.

4. A copy or copies of all of the relevant laws, regulations, directives, policies, procedures, etc. that empower and/or authorise and/or otherwise permit the Ministry of Social Development / a Work and Income Service Centre to decide that an application has "lapsed".

Please see the following links for information regarding lapsed applications and the 20-working day rule:

- www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2018/0202/latest/LMS96673.html
- www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/requests-for-financial-assistance/application-for-benefit/application-lapses-01.html
- <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2018/0202/latest/LMS96677.html>www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/requests-for-financial-assistance/application-for-benefit/extending-the-20-working-day-period-01.html
- <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/requests-for-financial-assistance/application-for-benefit/good-and-sufficient-reason-01.html>

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp.



Anna Graham
General Manager
Ministerial and Executive Services